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Collaborating to Teach Research Methods in Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to describe a pedagogical collaboration between two research methods instructors in a Faculty of Education in Canada. Both instructors represent different paradigms in the classic quantitative vs. qualitative dichotomy in that they were trained in vastly different ways and have tended to approach their research along these same lines. However, despite these differences the paper explores how they each viewed this as a potential limitation in their methods teaching and how through crossing over to each other's classrooms were able to both expand their own understanding as well as offer a more balanced and useful learning experience for the learners in their classrooms.

What can a statistician and an arts-based researcher learn from one another? Plenty, it would seem. This paper documents the two authors' experiences collaborating to teach general research methods courses in a Faculty of Education at a Canadian University. We – Todd and Catherine – completed our doctoral studies at approximately the same time and found ourselves contracted to teach methods classes shortly thereafter. During our respective studies in the same Faculty, one of us (Todd) was trained predominantly in statistical methods while the other (Catherine) was trained predominantly in participatory, action-oriented, and arts-based approaches to research. Although our training represented different orientations and our respective background experiences, interests, and personalities inevitably shaped the content, focus, and pedagogical strategies we each employed in our particular classrooms, we both aimed to present the students with a holistic approach to research. As such, we recognized the boundaries of our own knowledge and drew upon one another's strengths to enrich the experiences of the adult learners in our classrooms. We feel that by offering the students a more collaborative view of research we might, as Luttrell (2007) describes, induct students in education into a community of scholarly practice, rather than forcing them into a decision about a specific research identity (p. 186).

Professional educators are often required to participate in at least one graduate level research methods course in order to complete a Master's degree. However, the purpose of that course, as well as its content and paradigmatic orientation, can vary dramatically according to the instructor, the students, and the specific discipline in education in which the course is housed (among other factors). Consequently, the purpose of including research methods in the curriculum remains an unresolved issue in teacher education. Lei (2010; 2008) notes in particular that there are different implications for teaching depending upon whether the intention is for students to become producers or consumers of educational research – a distinction on which we will elaborate below as it is relevant to our respective approaches.

The existence of multiple approaches to teaching research methods is not unique to

faculties of education, of course. Various approaches have been documented by authors in disciplines such as Sociology (Bulmer & Burgess, 1981; Navaro, 2005; Shostak, Girouard, Cunningham, & Cadge, 2010), Public Health (Morrel-Samuel & Zimmerman, 2010), Geography (Crooks, Castleden & Tromp-Van Meerveld, 2010; Kindon & Elwood, 2009; Pain, 2009), Nursing (Clark, Stanforth & Humphries), and in a number of other disciplines that employ participatory and/or action-oriented approaches to research (Barzangi, 2006; Etmanski, 2007; Kur, DePorres & Westrup, 2008; Levin & Martin, 2007). Contemporary educational researchers may draw insights from these and other disciplines, further informing the range of paradigms, methodologies, instruments, and methods from which they draw.

While Creswell (2008) promotes qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches to research design, the range of possibilities expands well beyond the samples provided in his classic and oft-cited text. Educational researchers increasingly draw upon a range of methodologies to conduct their studies, such as Indigenous methodologies (e.g. Kovach, 2009), participatory or action-oriented methodologies (e.g. Reason & Bradbury, 2006), narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) and arts-based research (e.g. Eisner, 1997; 1981; Knowles & Cole, 2008) to name only a few. Similarly, for students who are required to complete a capstone project or thesis, the introductory experience of a research methods class is the potential opportunity to choose among these diverse approaches to research and gain at least a surface level appreciation of how the overall research design, as well as the ontological and epistemological positioning of the researcher and phrasing of the question(s), can affect the study results. The challenge for the instructor, then, becomes one of introducing a curriculum that is both broad enough to generate a sense of possibility and a narrow enough to create clarity and a feasible way forward.

The focus of the collaboration outlined here is across a series of education research methods classes – both in person and online – taught by both instructors. We felt that in order to better meet the needs of our students something greater than our own understanding of relevant issues and approaches might be useful and, to this end, sought out each other for collaboration. This paper outlines some of the issues in the literature around research methodology but primarily speaks to the collaborative process we brought to our classroom instruction: the benefits it offered both ourselves and our students and the belief that by modelling this behaviour we can potentially help students avoid dichotomizing views in educational research.

The paper is organized as follows. We open by providing the background and context for the methods courses we taught. Here we provide the descriptions included in the university calendar and describe the diverse audiences to which these courses appeal. Next we briefly present literature related to collaboration in methods teaching and the intrinsic value of both learning from colleagues and including guest speakers in a classroom. We suggest that collaboration benefits both instructors and students and describe why it was helpful for us in addressing the diverse needs of the adult learners in our classes. An overview of our unique backgrounds and training follows. Here we outline both our areas of expertise and the limitations of our knowledge, a discussion that sets the stage for what we went on to learn from one another. Next we outline the evolution of our collaboration, from Todd's virtual visit in Catherine's online classroom, to each of our lectures in one another's face-to-face classrooms. We conclude with a discussion of what we learned through this process, particularly in terms of our own reduction in dichotomous thinking in research and our hope that we conveyed this to our students. With the story of our experience, our intention is to communicate that through this collaboration we found ourselves on a journey of learning together that we may not have chosen

to take individually and that this was both personally enriching and beneficial to the students.

Context: An Overview of Two Methods Courses in Education

The Faculty of Education in which we were both teaching is home to three graduate departments, with over 16 programme areas. The Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies provides different areas of focus for graduate students in Educational Psychology (where Todd taught) and in Leadership Studies (where Catherine taught). This section describes the background of each course and demonstrates how each has different stated purposes and is geared toward different audiences.

The description for Todd's educational research course, provided in the 2011 University calendar, states that the class is an *introduction to quantitative and qualitative research designs, the research process, the selection and design of data collection instruments and methods, writing and reporting findings, and systematically evaluating and critiquing the quality of research studies. [It is intended to be] useful for students preparing to conduct thesis research as well as students who wish to become better readers and consumers of research.*¹ According to Lei (2008), research "consumers locate, read, understand, critique, and then use results of research to make sound educational decisions" (p. 668). With this definition in mind, the major purpose of the course was to introduce students to the broad field of educational research so that they could: (i) critically evaluate the research conducted by others; (ii) develop plans for and conduct research of their own if they so desired; (iii) identify methodological issues and practices that are relevant to a given research situation; and (iv) locate and understand information relevant to their practice or research agenda. The simple objective for this class is to have the student leave with more confidence in the consumption and potential production of research.

Meanwhile, Catherine's course was *designed to prepare students in Leadership Studies to undertake independent, scholarly research so that they might fulfil the research requirements for the M.Ed. degree in Leadership Studies. [Through this course, students] become familiar with different lines of inquiry, appropriate methodologies, proposal preparation, and the ethics involved in doing research.* The primary purpose of this course was to provide students with the theoretical and methodological knowledge, as well as the practical guidance, to design a working version of their final project proposals. Throughout this course, students were expected to: (i) demonstrate an understanding of academic research norms, including the content expected in a Master's level project; (ii) differentiate between various research methodologies and methods, and select which of these were best suited to their research question and interests; (iii) evaluate the relevance of their personal history and location (worldview, biases, related experiences, etc.), the limitations of their studies and ethical concerns such as power dynamics, informed consent, voluntary participation, compensation, research relationships, and so on; (iv) understand some strategies for data analysis and representation of research findings; and (v) generate a working document that explained the overall design of their projects, including research focus, question (and sub-questions if applicable), objectives, appropriate methods for pursuing their line of inquiry, a draft timeline, and a plan for next steps. In the subsequent semester, several of the students in this class went on to secure ethical reviews for their projects and collect data with Catherine as their capstone project supervisor. Others were required to participate in a second research class in preparation for conducting thesis research.

It is important to understand that these general courses must appeal to students with not only diverse backgrounds and interests, but also diverse requirements for graduation. For

example, the M.Ed. in Counselling is considered to be a terminal degree designed for people seeking to secure skills and credentials to work in applied fields. Indeed, as part of their program, one option for the final graduating project is to build a research proposal; however, these students are not actually able to conduct research. These factors contribute to a general perception that a class in research methods is not necessary given their career paths, a negative perception toward required research methods classes also described by Lei (2010; 2008). Our challenge as educators is not only to help such students develop skills to critically evaluate research findings in order to apply them to their fields, but also to help them understand that “research is a way of thinking, a tool that they may use to improve the work they do with other people” (Lei, 2008, p. 668).

Additionally, as adult learners, many graduate education students are working full time outside of their studies. Students in the M.Ed. Counselling program must complete an intensive practicum while simultaneously completing coursework, or are sometimes already working as counsellors. Leadership Studies draws students from education and higher education, government, business, and a range of other sectors. M.Ed. students in Leadership Studies, are often currently or previously employed as community educators in a range of disciplines (environmental non-profit organizations, for example), as public or private school teachers, guidance counsellors, or administrators in the public school system, or – increasingly – as international educators, either Canadians who primarily teach abroad, or international students who are teachers or other professionals in their home countries. Some of these students choose a more practical focus for their final project, while others choose a more theoretically focused thesis. The introductory methods courses must support this diverse range of learners with an equally diverse range of goals and needs. In light of this diversity, the following section reviews some of the literature on successful approaches to teaching research methods.

Mutual Learning through a Collaborative Approach

In their 1981 paper, sociologists Martin Bulmer and Robert Burgess asked several fundamental questions about the way forward for methodology teaching. Among them were: “if methodology is taught by experienced researchers will this area become little more than an excursion around the personal experiences of individual researchers? In this respect, will research methodology be little more than the personal preferences of individual investigators?” (p. 588). Crooks, Castleden, and Tromp-Van Meerveld (2010) raised a similar concern when one of the authors stated:

I’m reluctant to make it a class about *my* methodologies, methods, and techniques but am very aware that it could easily become such without concerted effort on my part . . . I’m not in a position to speak from personal experience about many of the issues we’ll be discussing. Further, I’ve taught myself about many of these things as they were not taught to me while in graduate school. I’m concerned that I may unintentionally favour certain perspectives in a way that could shape the students’ own study design. (p. 160)

While some scholars might argue that the teacher’s acknowledged or unacknowledged biases will *always* shape students’ learning, the point is well taken that methods instructors need to be mindful of not allowing their own preferences to dominate students’ research needs and interests.

A number of scholars have pointed to collaboration and the use of guest speakers as means of mitigating this challenge. For example, Lei (2010) suggests that “faculty teaching introductory research courses in academic programs can expand their instructional network by

tapping into ideas and experiences of colleagues in similar disciplines” (p. 239). In an earlier study, he also reported that the inclusion of guest speakers was among the top six factors influencing the students’ changing attitudes toward, and increasing appreciation of, the value of research courses (Lei, 2008, p. 676). Moreover, in their discussion of a collaborative approach to teaching, Zhou, Kim, and Kerekes (2011) reported that “peer observations made the three instructors familiar with each other’s teaching styles and instructional emphases, and more important, they often resulted in new ideas about integration between sessions and subjects” (2011, p. 130). Finally, Shostak, Girouard, Cunningham, and Cadge (2010) suggest that “all groups, including faculty, benefit from an understanding that they are part of a broader research team, promoting a feeling of collegiality across the department” (p. 94). All of these authors suggest that there is much we can learn from our colleagues if we dare to step across what Luttrell (2007) calls the “anxiety ridden border” of each other’s classrooms (p. 191).

This collaborative approach to mutual learning benefits both educators and students. Students benefit not only from the content knowledge provided by diverse instructors, they also learn through instructors modelling collaboration, a desire to learn from one another, and, at times, productive critical debate. As Waters and Burcroff (2007) assert, “with adult learners – and learners in general – it is important to note that one of the basic components of learning is seeing and experiencing the behaviour in practice” (p. 306). This sentiment is echoed by Zhou, Kim, and Kerekes (2011) who report that their classroom modelled

how to work together in teaching. [...] university teaching, particularly methods courses, has direct influence on pre-service teachers’ understanding of teaching. Faculty collaboration in university teaching impacts future teachers’ perspectives of collaborative teaching and motivates them to teach collaboratively at schools. (p. 133)

Scholars such as these both affirm our choice to learn from one another throughout our teaching and inspire us to continue experimenting with various ways to collaborate.

The reviews concerning our collaboration were quite positive and students appeared to enjoy and benefit from these guest lectures and the diversity of methods presented. Student feedback from the courses reflects this sentiment in the following statements: “The guest speakers really worked well to enhance the content” or “Great survey of research methods and we really benefited from the guest speakers (no offence Todd, we like you too!).” “[The instructor] was able to motivate us to put our knowledge to use – this utilizing of our skills has made us proficient in methods – both to our interest and also those Methods we may not necessarily use.” In addition, students commented directly to us that they appreciated both instructors’ efforts to bring others into the classroom and that these experiences helped to broaden their perspectives on conducting research.

Two Distinct Research Backgrounds

As mentioned above, each of us comes from different theoretical and paradigmatic backgrounds. For Todd, the basis of his doctoral training and the body of his dissertation was primarily – if not entirely – quantitative in nature. Additionally, his ongoing research deals with the secondary analysis of large data sets, e.g., Programme for International School Assessment (PISA) or Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Todd is often called upon by graduate students and other professors to help in data analysis and interpretations. He is well versed on univariate statistics, test theory, and measurement in the areas of education and educational psychology.

Todd approaches the world and his research from a decidedly positivistic paradigm, urged to deduce, test theory, and search for measurable outcomes. From this perspective, research relates to measuring or quantifying, elements of reality. A survey is the method he most commonly uses for collecting data and he analyses the data using statistical calculations. He teaches his students about representative samples so that the results can reasonably be generalized to a larger population and that there are specific (and occasionally conflicting) calculations for doing this. Todd more readily approaches – and tends to spend more class time on – the topics of survey design, correlation, and experimental analysis. He finds these topics easier to explain and discuss, and finds it easier to locate and provide relevant examples and information as well.

Conversely, Catherine was thoroughly trained as a qualitative researcher. She participated not only in general research methods courses and seminars at the graduate level, but also in special topic courses such as *Participatory Research*, *Action-Oriented Approaches to Research*, *Popular Theatre as Research*, and *Aboriginalizing Research*. For her doctoral work, she employed Arts-Based Research (e.g. Eisner, 1997; 1981; Knowles & Cole, 2008) as an overarching methodology with participatory theatre (Boal, 2002; 1979; Butterwick, 2002; Diamond, 2007; Kidd & Byram, 1979) as her key research method. Needless to say, she approaches the world and her research from a different perspective than Todd.

In particular, Catherine enjoys engaging learners in philosophical discussions about research and encourages them to examine their assumptions about the nature of reality, being, and knowledge—and how these assumptions affect what researchers see as truth or valid research outcomes. The discussion of data collection methods is often driven by student interests and always includes experiential activities that demonstrate how multiple methods, including arts-based methods, can generate data and new knowledge. She loves the moment when a light bulb goes off and students realize that surveys, interviews, and focus groups are important, yes, but not the only means of collecting data.

All instructors inevitably bring their worldviews and lessons from their respective training into their lectures, activities, and discussions. However, with these brief descriptions of each of our backgrounds, it is perhaps not hard to imagine that the students in either of our classes might encounter very different experiences. Our training and interests aside, as instructors and professionals, we felt responsible to ensure that students who would be engaging with either quantitative or qualitative methods had sufficient exposure to and resources on the necessary tools to be successful researchers (or consumers of research, as described earlier). With this recognition of our human limitations firmly in mind, we worked to mitigate these by offering three guest experiences in one another's classes over the course of a year. These three exchanges are described below.

Our Experiences as Guest Speakers in Each Other's Classrooms

The initial foray into this collaboration was through an online (i.e., Moodle) section of Catherine's Community Based Research course during the fall of 2010. For readers not familiar with Moodle, it is a course management system that supports a constructivist approach to online learning. Since "constructivists suggest that teachers should let students' learning drive what they teach" (Zhou, Kim & Kerekes, 2011, p. 131), the online format presented a perfect opportunity to create a space for quantitatively-oriented students to receive support from Todd. This particular course was set up according to weekly thematic units, with the adult learners

directing much of the conversation in the discussion forums. In this initial experiment in collaboration, Catherine invited Todd into this digital classroom space to offer guidance on statistics and the role of quantitative data collection and analysis methods in research. During the week of Todd's visit, Catherine created a "bonus discussion forum" where the students could ask him questions directly. The forum was set up for asynchronous conversation (i.e. more like e-mail; not real-time communication, such as chat rooms), which meant that Todd could respond to questions and engage in ongoing discussion as his time permitted. Catherine opened the forum with a brief introduction and photo of Todd, and posted a few questions to get the conversation started. Todd then accessed the Moodle Site a few times during the week-long unit to respond to Catherine's initial questions and to those of the students. During his virtual visit, he shared resources, examples, and philosophical musings and students commented that his presence was most useful.

Two actions helped to make this experience a positive one and are worth noting here. First, Catherine was deliberate in preparing the learners for Todd's visit and also in facilitating the discussion while it was underway. Although the online environment can be disorienting for some students, Catherine has been teaching online for some time and through practice has come to understand how to prepare students for a virtual guest. Accordingly, she had alerted them about Todd's visit several times, had encouraged them to generate questions in advance, and had directed them to the correct forum when he arrived in the virtual space. As a result, they knew he was coming and knew where to find him – seemingly simple details, but without which the experience would have been lost. Second, despite the asynchronous nature of this interaction, Todd responded to the students' queries quickly, and provided further elaboration as they requested it, thus creating a feeling of ongoing dialogue and immediacy that can occasionally be lost in slower asynchronous communication.

We both considered this initial collaboration to be such a success that we arranged for Todd to give another guest presentation in Catherine's face-to-face research methods class the following term. The lecture he gave was entitled, "Introduction to quantitative research, or how I learned to stop worrying and love statistics" and was based primarily upon the text *Doing Quantitative Research with SPSS* (Muijs, 2011). Initially, Todd had some concerns about this guest visit. Unfortunately, his previous teaching and collaborative experiences with students supported Lei's (2010; 2008) claim that quantitative data analysis and statistics are seldom the highlight of students' graduate training in education! Despite this initial consternation, the experience was quite a positive one and offered a decidedly different perspective from what this group of learners had been receiving in the class thus far. The students' questions were directly related to their own research agendas and Todd helped to clarify several points related to his expertise.

The course reviews demonstrated that students appreciated and understood the value of exposure to multiple perspectives on research, and one student in particular was very grateful to have Todd's guidance for her research design. She later commented:

Prior to Todd's lecture I was unsure if I had the capability to pursue a mixed methodological approach. I was not confident that I knew enough about the material to understand and analyse the results I would collect. Listening to Todd speak and having the opportunity to ask him questions in relation to my study gave me the confidence to further explore quantitative statistics as a method of inquiry. I now feel confident in this methodological approach and will be using a quantitative survey in my study. (Z. Woods, personal communication, February 13, 2012, cited with permission)

What stands out in Catherine's mind is how Todd spoke about the fluidity and complexity of 'truth' with eloquence and humour, despite being admittedly grounded in a positivist paradigm. This experience revealed how literature written by both qualitative and quantitative researchers often creates a false dichotomy and intentionally or unintentionally constructs the 'Other' as inferior. In surfacing her assumptions, this experience also underscored how easy it can be to make assumptions about another scholar's beliefs when we do not engage in dialogue with a genuine desire to learn.

In our final example of collaboration, Todd invited Catherine into his class. As part of Todd's approach to his survey research methods class, he invited a series of guest speakers ranging from the research librarian, to representatives from the human ethics board, and a series of graduate students or scholars who had recently completed their PhDs. Each of these guests came into the classroom at different points throughout the semester to deliver their perspectives on research or research approaches. In this case, Catherine came in to speak about her doctoral dissertation and subsequent research pursuits. Her approach to the class was inclusive and she created a seminar-type atmosphere. She learned names quickly and asked about students' research interests in order to link her work to theirs. After a brief overview of her dissertation – an arts-based study, through which she demonstrated principles of action-oriented, participatory, and arts-based research – she opened the floor to questions and discussion. For Todd, what was most memorable about this interaction was how seamlessly Catherine was able to incorporate ideas and terms such as validity or generalizability, which he had previously covered in the class, albeit from a different perspective. Catherine offered real life definitions of what these sometimes abstract terms represent. From reading the student reviews for this class, Todd knows that this experience was a positive and meaningful highlight.

Reflections on Our Learning

Gaining a window into another instructor's methods classroom and inviting that same individual into our own classrooms became a bright spot in our teaching over the year. As sessional instructors, we were required to teach many classes and often did so in isolation and relative obscurity. Being involved in another professional's classes, witnessing interactions with students, and new approaches to pedagogy has been deeply informative to our teaching. We each witnessed a colleague who was passionate about the subject, took the role of instructor as a serious and important one, and cared deeply about the personal journey and learning of the students. We could not have asked for a more rewarding and motivating experience. Additionally, this opportunity also offered a level of feedback and validation of our own approaches to teaching that is otherwise unavailable. We shared philosophical and pedagogical approaches that helped make the work feel worthwhile.

One of the biggest learning opportunities we have taken from this collaboration, and that we have hopefully been able to share with our students, is a reduction in dichotomous thinking. The idea of a dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research is perhaps helpful when first learning these ideas, but is not *always* a useful one. Ercikan and Roth (2006) suggest that instead of dichotomizing research into qualitative and quantitative, we need integrative approaches that provide the appropriate forms of knowledge. To this end we both have sought to – in our own teaching as well as research – recognize and demonstrate how both research orientations have many similarities. As Ercikan and Roth (2006) suggest, this dichotomy of qualitative vs. quantitative actually does a disservice to research by promoting certain types of

data collection and certain construction modes rather than focusing on good research questions and conducting good research (p. 14).

Despite the recognition *in theory* that researchers might be more successful to focus on research questions and design instead of working to fit into predetermined paradigms, it was only through exchanges between us, both in our respective classes as well as through more informal conversations, that the value of this understanding became more relevant *in practice*. Todd remembers asking Catherine in class what she defined as mixed-methods in her research as what she was explaining did not fit with his preconceived notions. She explained that as part of her doctoral candidacy exams, she was required to examine four research approaches, four methodologies, and four methods and then justify which of these she would be employing in her study. In order to complete this exam, she was required to produce theoretically grounded working definitions of each of these categories (approach, methodology, and method) because the scholarly literature provides contradictory information and her committee members did not pre-determine which of these definitions she ought to use.

She ultimately chose to use Sandra Harding's classic work, *Is there a feminist method?* to justify her claims and define "a research method [as] a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence" (Harding, 1987, p. 2). As Harding further explains,

One reason it is difficult to find a satisfactory answer to questions about a distinctive feminist method is that discussions of method (techniques for gathering evidence) and methodology (a theory and analysis of how research should proceed) have been intertwined with each other and with epistemological issues (issues about an adequate theory of knowledge or justification strategy) in both the traditional and feminist discourses. This claim is a complex one and we shall sort out its components. *But the point here is simply that "method" is often used to refer to all three aspects of research [emphasis added]*. Consequently, it is not at all clear what one is supposed to be looking for when trying to identify a distinctive "feminist method of research." (Harding, 1987, p.2)

With this reasoning in mind, Catherine finds it difficult to relate to suggestions that there are only three approaches to methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed. Rather, she sees qualitative and quantitative more as descriptions about one's approach or orientation to social science research, with many possible methods embedded therein. These might include more traditional methods such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups, and non-traditional methods such as theatre and other artistic media, community building methods, and cultural methods employed, for instance, by Indigenous researchers. Moreover, the methods or tools for gathering data can themselves be employed in more qualitative or quantitative ways according to the researcher's training, research objectives, or perhaps even personality or preference. Interviews can be conducted in a more linear, formulaic fashion, or in a more open-ended, discursive manner; surveys can likewise employ a numerical Likert scale (e.g., a scale of 1 to 5) or use open-ended questions which enable more nuanced information to emerge. In this sense, the quantitative/qualitative divide quickly becomes a false dichotomy.

To Catherine, then, the term mixed methods has come to mean any combination of the above methods, though she recognizes this is not the traditional definition. Although Todd was initially a little taken aback by the explanation that she was required to come to her own definition, he (*thinks* he) has begun to better appreciate the validity of this approach. He *knows* he better recognizes that his individual position influences how he does things in general and how he approaches research. He realizes that there are certain perspectives that appeal to him

more than others, and certain data that he will be more apt to collect. However, this collaboration has helped him see that there are valid reasons why all research is conducted and he is beginning to better recognize the strengths of non-dominant research approaches. Catherine shared a similar realization through this discussion, but from a different perspective. Since she mostly finds herself in the company of colleagues who have read similar literature, she sometimes forgets that statisticians have very different training than she does and have not always been exposed to debates in the literature about paradigmatic stances (just as she has not been exposed to the same training and debates as they have, of course). What is more, because they are operating within traditional or dominant approaches, she has come to understand that such scholars are not always trained or required to examine their location and positioning in the world of research. Catherine's experience has been that more traditional researchers are sometimes more interested in dismissing or discrediting non-dominant approaches, rather than trying to learn from or about them. This is perhaps why she focuses on describing various approaches to validity and generalizability (as witnessed by Todd during her guest lecture). As is often the case, people with non-dominant knowledges are often required to explain or justify their claims in terms that make sense to dominant groups. It is refreshing to work with a person like Todd who is more interested in learning together than in discrediting non-dominant, innovative, or marginal approaches to research.

Closing Thoughts

This paper has offered a brief overview regarding collaboration between two colleagues in a Faculty of Education. It addresses a contemporary issue in teacher education in that it describes the challenge of teaching research methods to a diverse and multi-disciplinary group of students, who may or may not conduct scholarly research in practice. Through this collaboration in both teaching and writing, we were able to address for ourselves some of the paradigmatic differences between qualitative and quantitative research, and offer evidence for our students that perhaps this dichotomy is not always a useful one. In addition, we have documented an example of simple collaboration at the post-secondary level from which we hope other instructors might benefit. We feel that, based upon our own experiences and a (albeit non-random) sampling of comments made by students at the end of the classes, that we were successful in these areas. We believe that through our collaboration, students were supported in and confident enough to pursue their unique research agendas (as either consumers or producers of research), even when these agendas were outside of each author's individual comfort zone. The diversity of student needs was manageable when the authors worked together. Collaboration within the context of a research methods class allows both the teachers and students the opportunity to better understand the variety of tools available to answer questions which pertain to educational problems and issues. If not for this collaboration we believe we would have had a lesser experience, as would the students. When we return to our initial question, *what can a statistician and an arts-based researcher learn from one another?* the answer is, indeed, plenty.

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Notes

Author names are in reverse alphabetical order. Responsibility is shared equally between us.

¹ Although we recognize that full anonymity may not be possible when we are speaking about our own experiences, we have removed the name of the University in order to maintain some level of confidentiality.